This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 004584

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LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/02/2025
TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM KE
SUBJECT: TOP BANANAS SPEAK (FINALLY) TO DIPLOMATS

REF: A. NAIROBI 4555

¶B. NAIROBI 4551

Classified By: Political Counselor Michael J. Fitzpatrick for reasons 1
.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: After two months of requests from the
diplomatic community for a briefing from the pro-draft
constitution ("Banana") team ahead of the November 21
referendum, the government finally relented November 2. Most
notable was the Information Minister's statement that
allegations of foreign funding for the "No" (or "Orange")
campaign was not official government policy. While this was
a welcome clarification two days after the Ambassador's
strong message to the MFA that such an announcement was
overdue, the remainder of the hastily called session was
anticlimactic and underscored the "Yes" team's
disorganization. END SUMMARY.

MINISTERS DON'T SPEAK FOR THE GOVERNMENT (?)

¶2. (C) Even though invitations only went out after close of
business the night before, the government's briefing to
diplomats (and press) was attended by more than 50 diplomats.
 The briefing included remarks from the Constitution of Kenya
Review Committee (CKRC), the Electoral Commission of Kenya
(ECK), as well as Foreign Affairs Minister Ali Makwere and
Information Minister Raphael Tuju. Conspicuously absent was
the scheduled Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister
Kiraitu Murungi. While the other three presentations shed
little new light on the constitutional referendum process,
Minister Tuju opened his briefing directly stating that any
allegations that foreign countries, particularly the U.S. and
UK, were supporting one or the other side in the referendum,
did not reflect government policy. He described it as "the
opinion of individual politicians," not the government's
official view. During the discussion session, the Ambassador
welcomed Tuju's clarification, which came just two days after
the Ambassador had privately emphasized to the MFA the
necessity of such a statement (Ref A).

¶3. (SBU) Tuju quickly shifted gears to hurl barbs at "No"
leader Roads Minister Raila Odinga as the most recent in a
succession of "cult" leaders instigating electoral violence
since 1982. While Tuju did not specifically name the Roads
Minister, instead encouraging the audience to guess, his
description of a "clique attempting to Balkanize Kenya"
mirrored his statements at a press conference two days
earlier during which he railed against Raila. Responding to
a request for better information on scheduled "Yes" rallies,
the Minister noted that his group was less intent (than the
Orange group) on "convincing the international community of
its agenda," but also confessed that the "Yes" team was "not
very focused."

KISUMU CAUGHT THEIR EYE

¶4. (U) ECK Commissioner Jack Tumwa announced that at a
meeting earlier that day between his organization and members
of both the "Yes" and "No" National Referendum Committees,
the two sides took "not quite an oath" to shun electoral
violence. He reported that representatives from both sides
agreed to campaign against violence and to spread the message
to their followers in light of the deadly rally the previous
weekend in Kisumu (Ref B). Tumwa also noted that the ECK had
established peace committees in each of the nation's 210
constituencies to mediate and report violence.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Tuju's public disassociation of the
government from some officials' allegations of U.S. funding
for the "No" team was welcome and long overdue. But he fell
short of stating categorically that we are not supporting
either side in the referendum process. The absence of
Justice Minister Murungi, the government's lead official on
the constitutional review process, underscored the Banana
team's attitude that with the bulk of the government, as well
as the resources of the state machinery, behind them, the
referendum is theirs to lose. END COMMENT.
BELLAMY